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Letter dated 22 July 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the transcript of the special briefing held on 21 July 2014 by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation on the 17 July crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in the Ukrainian airspace (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and the enclosed transcript as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

The text of the transcript and the related video materials can be also found on the Internet at:

www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/ECD62987D4816CA344257D1D00251C76

www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline/F6C3BBD89AC2532D44257D1D00203CCF

stat.multimedia.mil.ru/multimedia/video/clips/more.htm?id=5088@morfVideoAudioFile

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

14-58257 (E) 280714 280714

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Annex to the letter dated 22 July 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Official website

Special briefing by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation on the crash of the Malaysian Boeing 777 in Ukrainian airspace, 21 July 2014

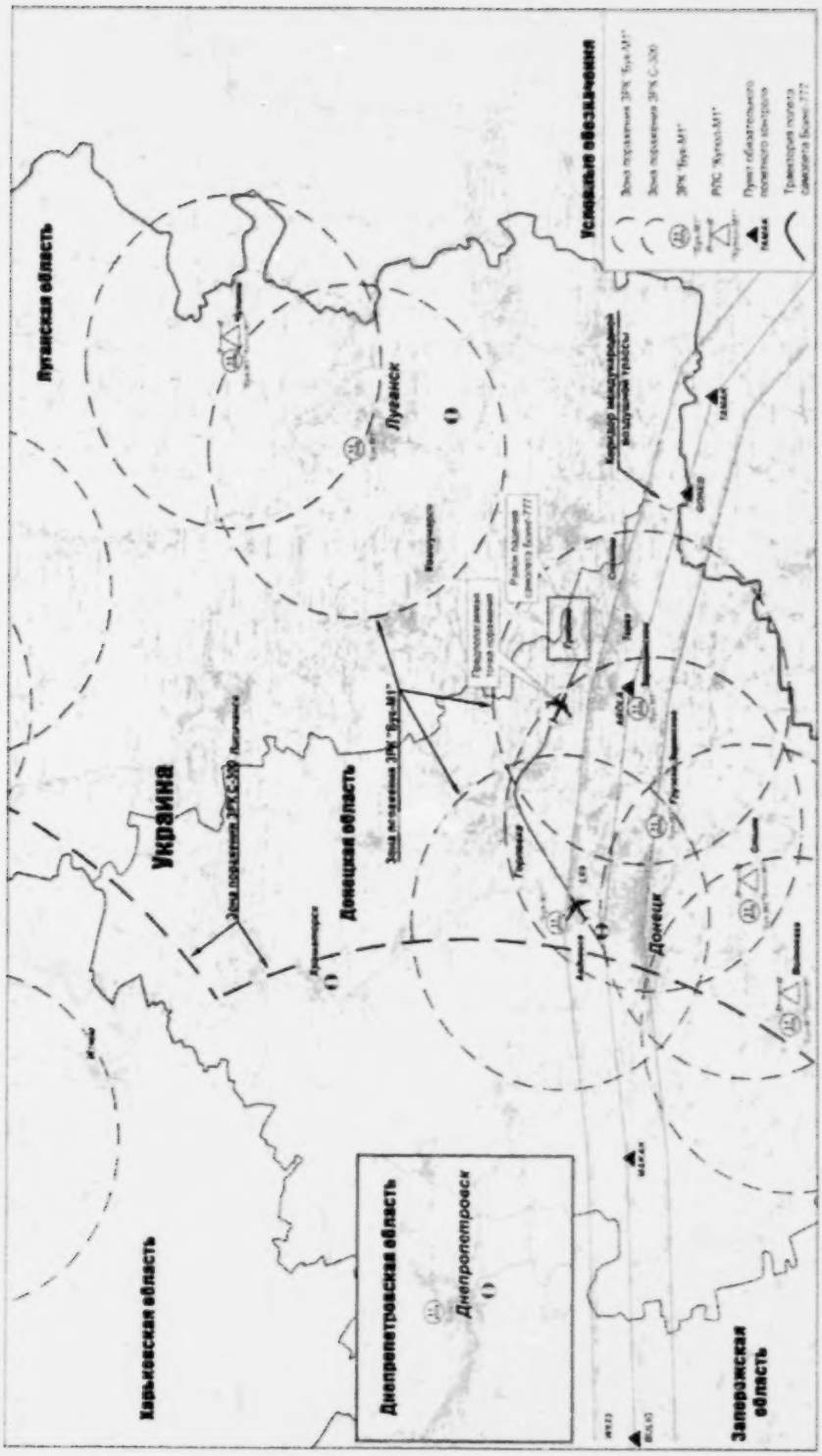
Statement by Lieutenant-General A. V. Kartapolov, Chief of the Main Operations Directorate and Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

Members of the media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Following the crash on 17 July of a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 passenger aircraft travelling on the international route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, a substantial amount of conflicting information has come to light in the past few days. The Ministry of Defence therefore considered it necessary to present the objective monitoring data in the possession of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

The map shows the international route along which the Boeing 777 was supposed to fly. You will see that, until it reached Donetsk, the aircraft remained within the established corridor, after which it deviated northward from the route. The maximum distance from the left boundary of the corridor was 14 km.


Луганская область
Украина
Харьковская область
Донецкая область
Днепропетровская область
Запорожская область
Луганск
Донецк
Днепропетровск
Условные обозначения

You can see that the Boeing 777 then made a turn to head back into the established airway. However, the Malaysian crew did not have time to complete the manoeuvre. At 1720 hours the aircraft began to slow steadily and at 1723 it disappeared from Russian radar screens. The reason why it flew outside the boundaries of the route — whether the crew made a navigational error or whether they were following orders from the Ukrainian air traffic controller in Dnepropetrovsk — will be ascertained only once the information from the on-board flight recorders, known as the "black boxes", and the communications with air traffic control have been decrypted.

According to our information, on the day that the Malaysian Boeing 777 went down, the air defence force of the Ukrainian Armed Forces had three or four BUK-M1 missile system battalions deployed near Donetsk.

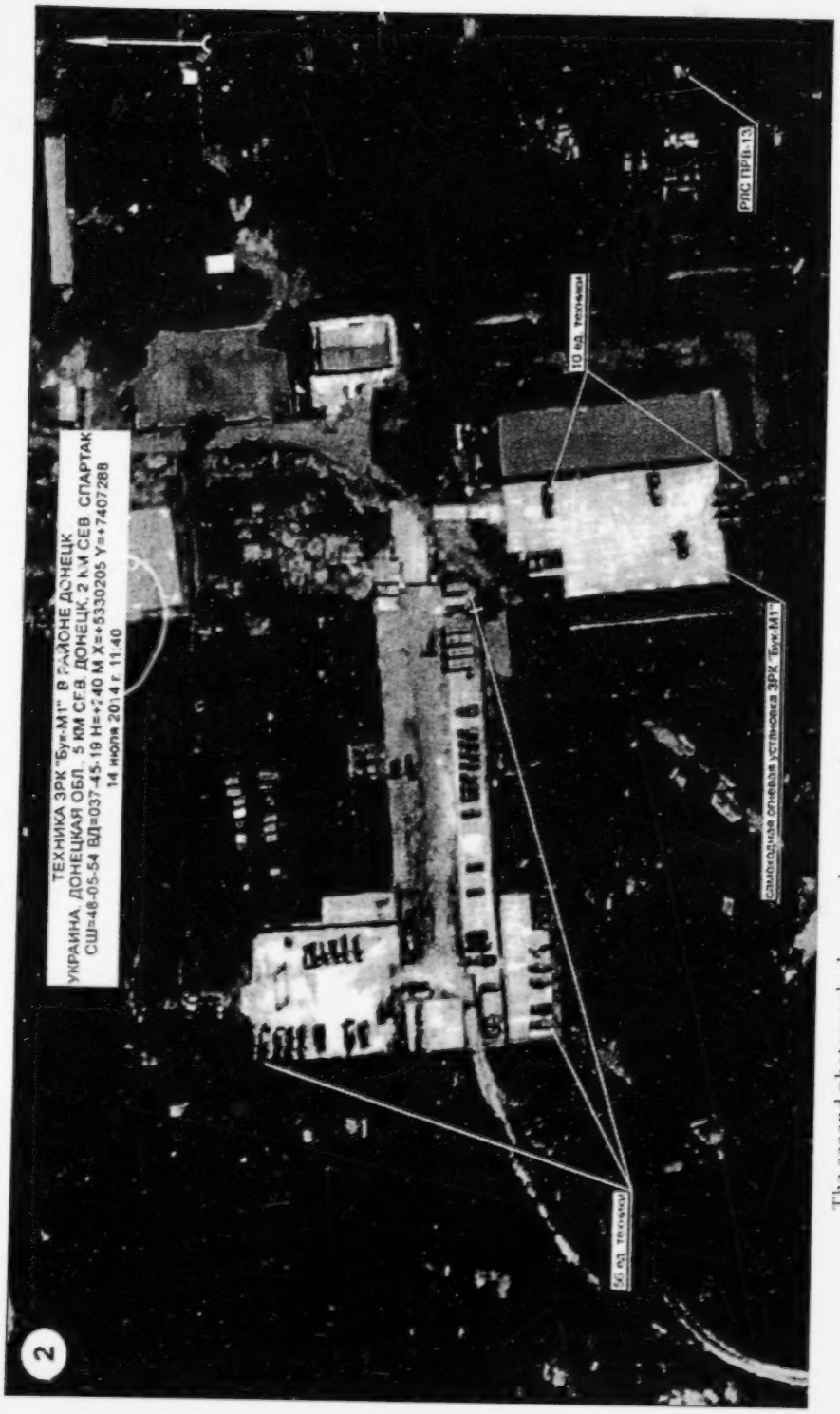
These systems are capable of hitting targets at a distance of up to 35 km and an altitude of up to 22 km. Why, and against whom, did the Ukrainian Armed Forces deploy such powerful air defence units in the vicinity of Donetsk? It is well known that the militants do not have any aircraft.

It can be seen from the map that both the flight path and the projected impact point of the Boeing are inside the operating range of the BUK-M1 missiles of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

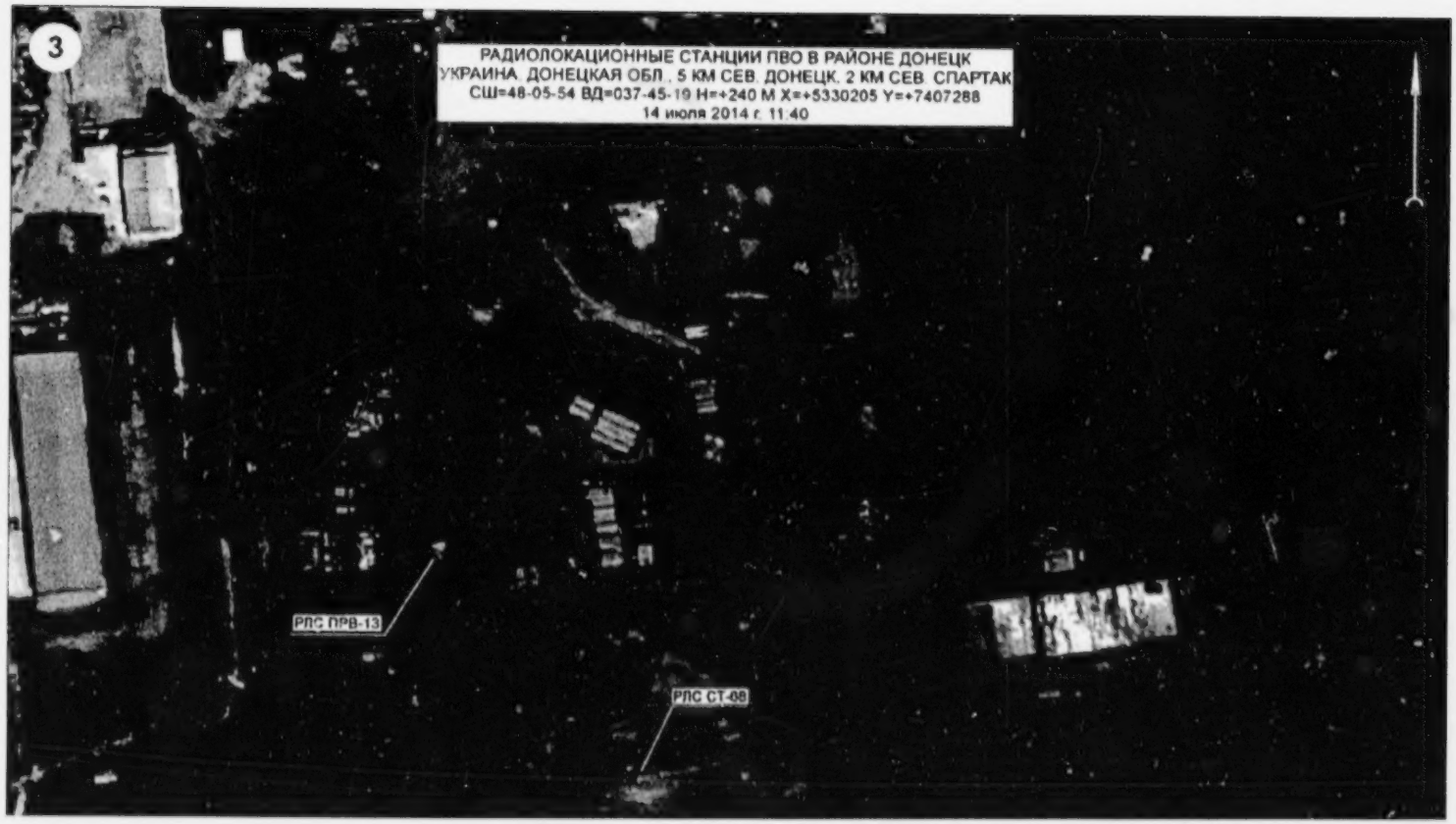
We have satellite imagery of the different sites where the Ukrainian army's anti-aircraft defences are located in south-eastern Ukraine.

The first three photographs are dated 14 July 2014:

The first photograph shows BUK missile launchers deployed 8 kilometres north-west of Luhansk. On the photograph you can see clearly a self-propelled launch system and two loading vehicles.



The second photograph shows radar systems located 5 km north of Donetsk. Two radar systems as well as various pieces of equipment and facilities can be seen on the photograph.



The third photograph shows the position of the air defence equipment north of Donetsk. You can see clearly on the photograph a self-propelled launch system with the launcher turned, some 60 pieces of military and special-purpose equipment, equipment shelters, and other technical facilities.

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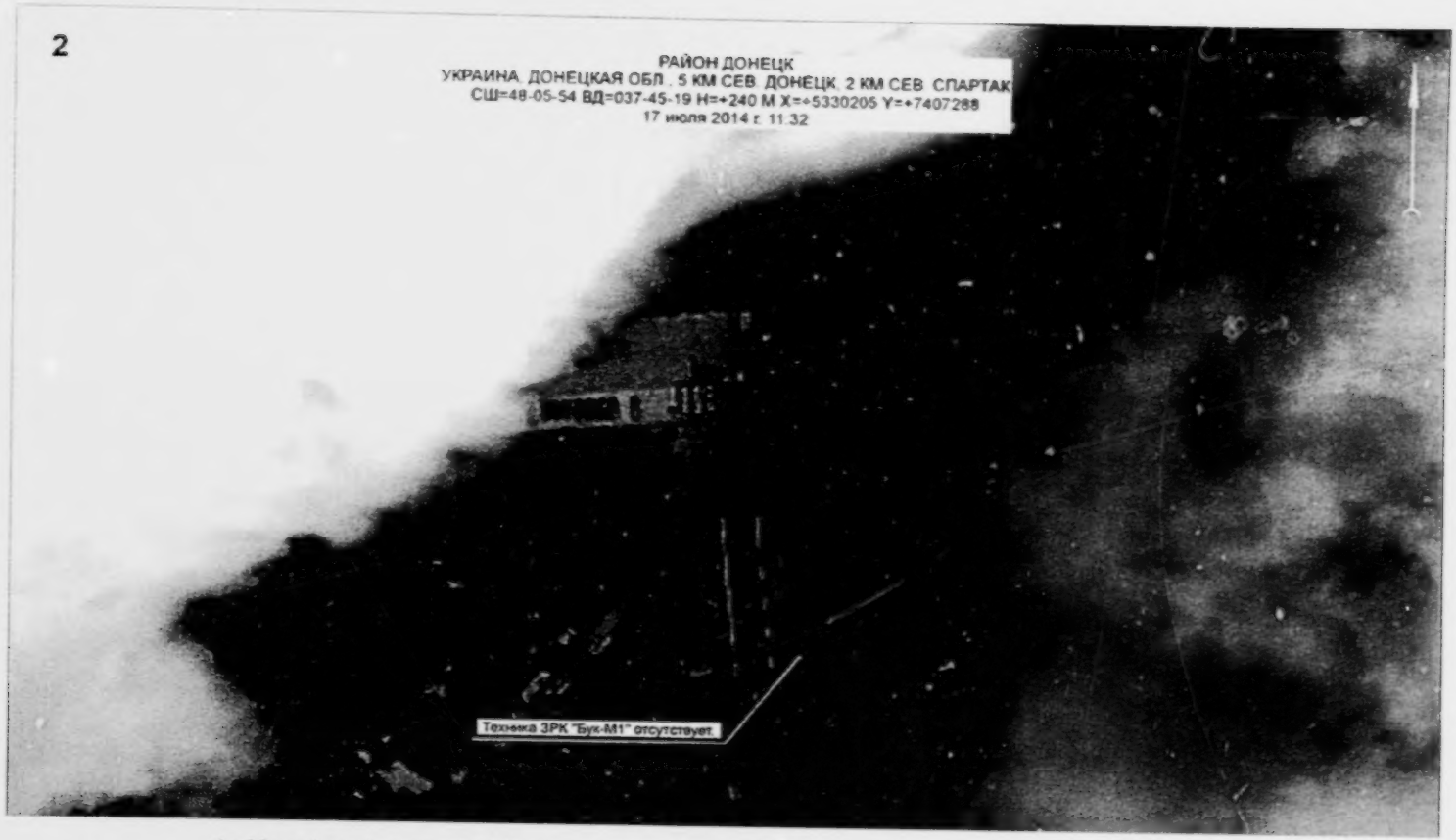
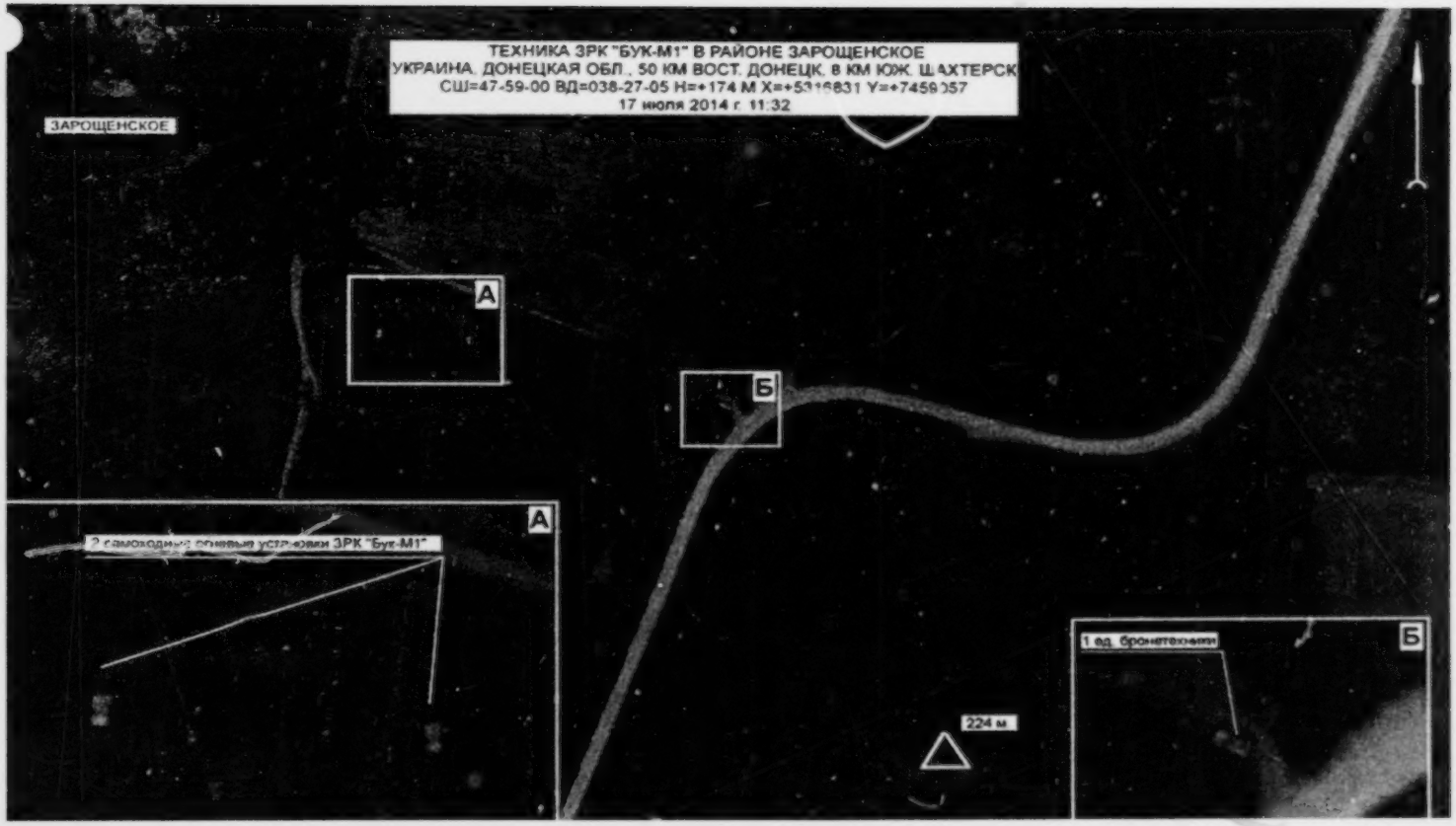
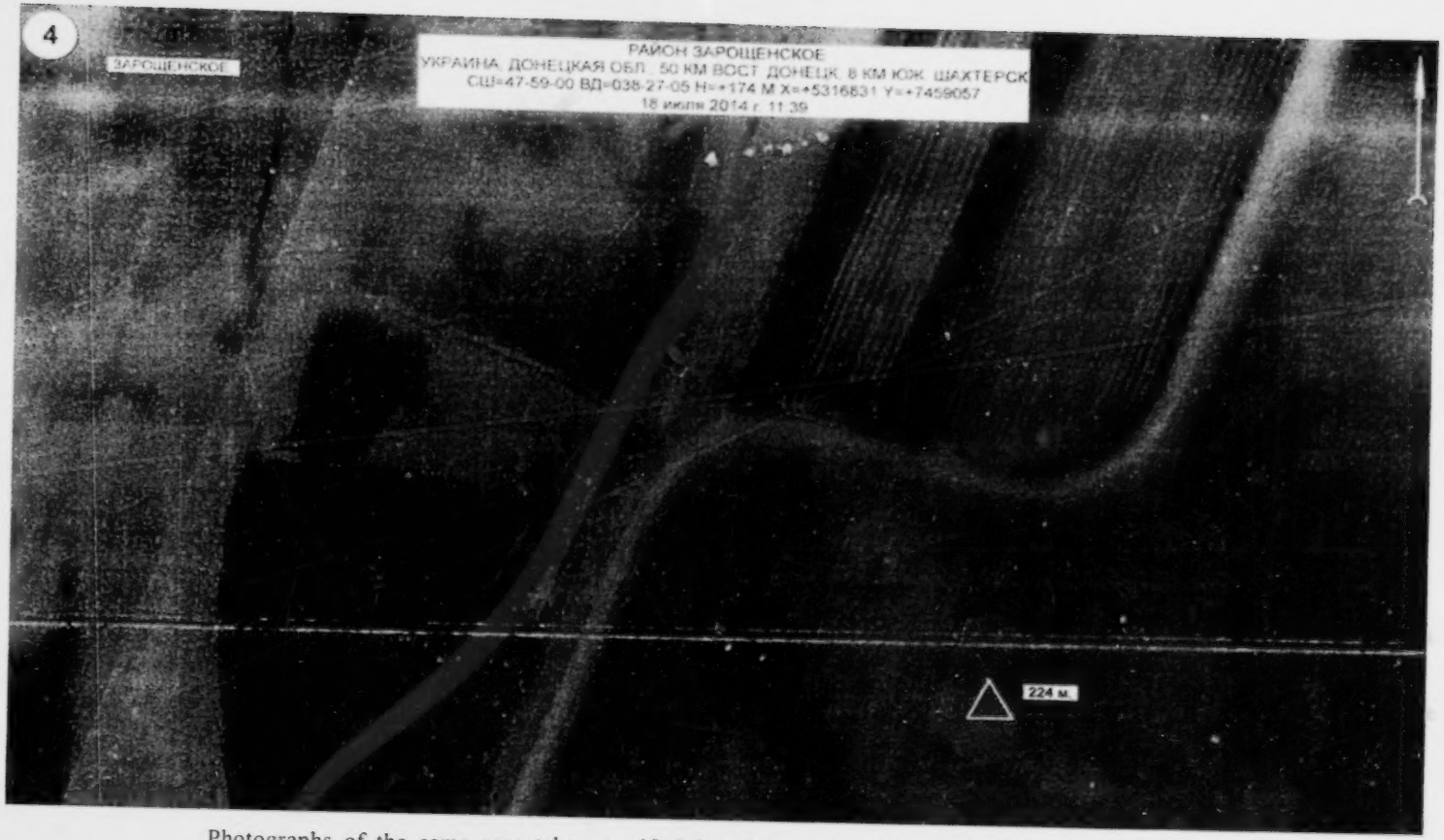


And here is a photograph of the same area taken on 17 July. Please note that the launch system is missing.



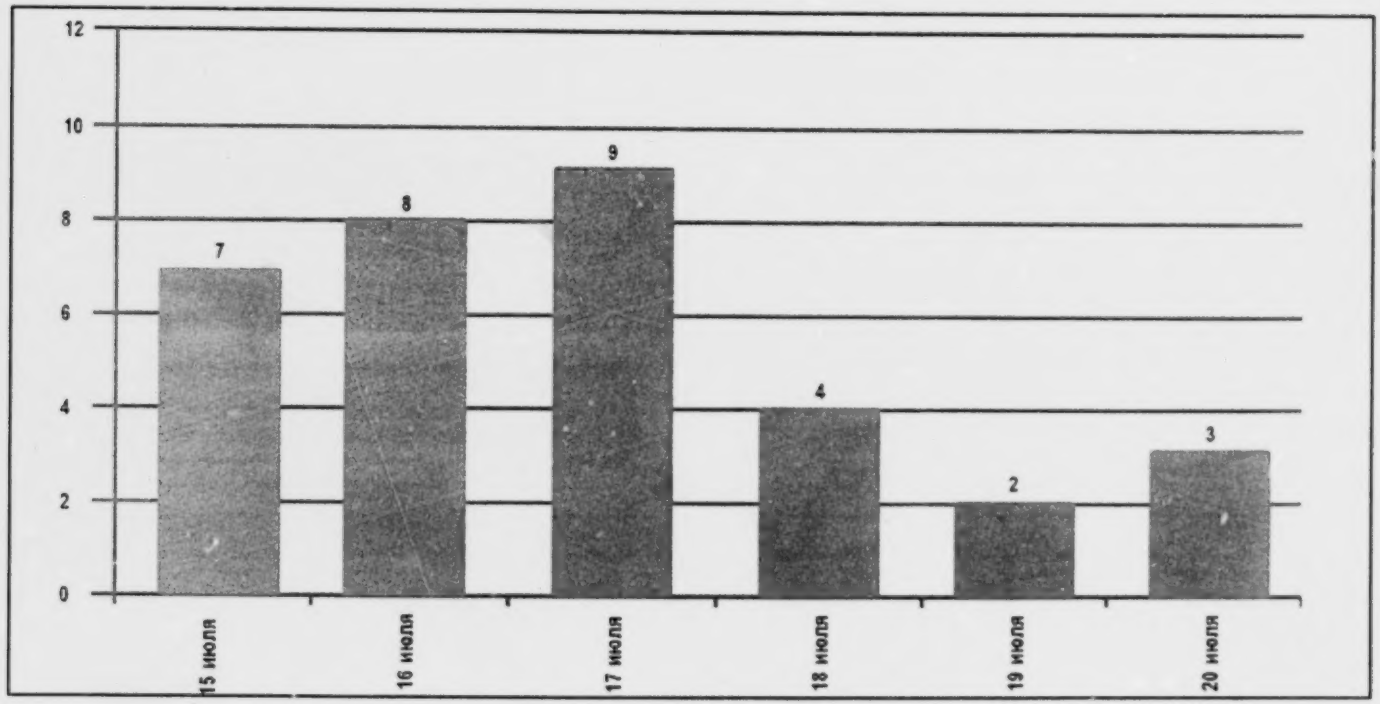
The fifth photograph shows that on the morning of that same day a BUK battery can be seen near the village of Zaroshchinsk, 50 km east of Donetsk and 8 km south of Shakhtarsk. The question arises as to why the battery appeared in this area, near the territory controlled by militants, right before the tragedy.



Photographs of the same area taken on 18 July (photograph 6) showed that the battery had left the position it had previously occupied.

Furthermore, it was precisely on 17 July that the Ukrainian 9S18 Kupol-M1 radar systems of the BUK missile system reached the peak of their activity.

СТАТИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ДАННЫЕ О КОЛИЧЕСТВЕ ФУНКЦИОНИРУЮЩИХ РЛС «КУПОЛ» С 15 ПО 20 ИЮЛЯ 2014 Г.



On the slide you can see that 7 systems were in operation on 15 July, 8 were in operation on 16 July and 9 were in operation on 17 July. Since 18 July the radar activity has dropped off sharply and has now reached 2 or 3 per day. The reason for this has yet to be determined.

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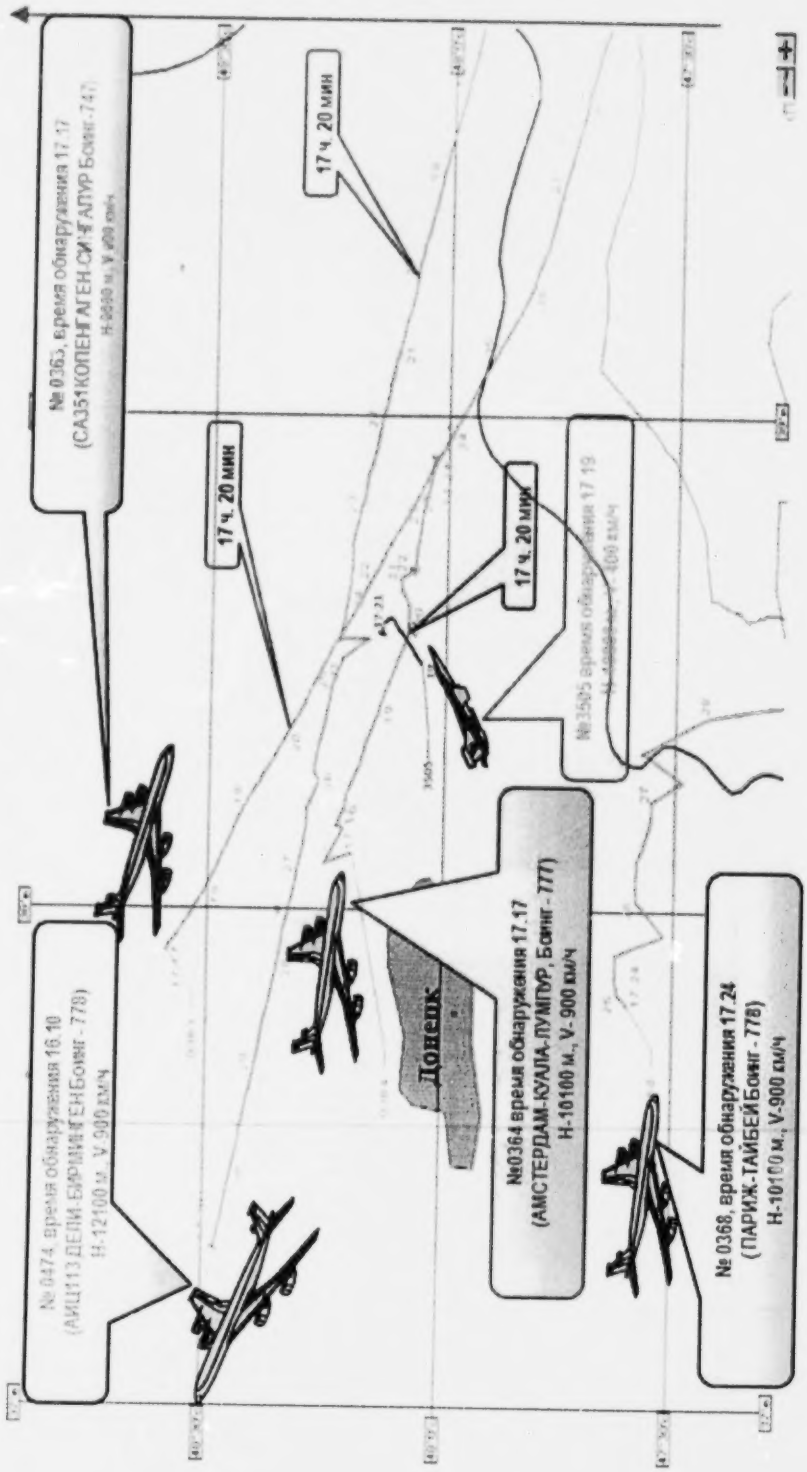
I would also like to present information on the situation in the air in the vicinity of Donetsk on that day.

On this slide you can see data derived from objective monitoring conducted during the period from 1710 to 1730 hours Moscow time.



At that time there were three civilian aircraft in the air, carrying out scheduled flights:

A flight from Copenhagen to Singapore at 1717;

A flight from Paris to Taipei at 1724;

The flight from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur.

In addition, Russian air traffic control detected a Ukrainian Air Force aircraft, presumably an Su-25, gaining height towards the Malaysian Boeing 777. The distance between the Su-25 and the Boeing 777 was 3-5 km.

The Su-25 is capable of quickly gaining an altitude of 10,000 m. It is armed with an R-60 air-to-air missile capable of locking onto and destroying a target at a distance of up to 12 km and a hit is guaranteed at a distance of up to 5 km.

Why was a military aircraft flying in a civil aviation airway at almost the same time and the same altitude as a civilian passenger aircraft? We would like to have this question answered.

Video recorded by the Rostov Aerial Centre of the Joint Air Traffic Management System corroborates this information. Lieutenant-General Igor Makushev, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, will comment on the video.

Commentary by Lieutenant-General I. Y. Makushev, Chief of Staff of the Air Force

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today the Federal Air Transport Agency provided objective monitoring materials from the Rostov Aerial Centre of the Unified Air Traffic Management System.

The video recording presents air traffic control data on the situation in the air in the region of Donetsk during the period from 1719 to 1725 hours (Moscow time) on 17 July 2014.

In the upper left corner is a data tag indicating a Boeing 772 aircraft en route from Copenhagen to Singapore.

Below that is another data tag indicating a Boeing 777 aircraft en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur.

To the right is a data tag indicating a Boeing 778 aircraft en route from Delhi to Birmingham.

All three aircraft are steadily monitored by the three radar stations of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.

The Boeing 777 is moving towards the State border of the Russian Federation and should cross it at the point marked "TONAK".

The air traffic controller, tracking the aircraft's flight, constantly enquires about its flight parameters and checks them against the given parameters.

At 1720 hours, at a distance of 51 km from the Russian border at 300 degrees of azimuth, the aircraft suddenly began losing speed, as can clearly be seen from the table of aircraft data.

With the aircraft speed reduced to 200 km/h, at 17 hours 21 minutes 35 seconds a new data tag indicating an aircraft appears at the point of the Boeing crash.

This aircraft was steadily tracked by the Ust-Donetsk and Buturinsk radar stations for four minutes.

The air traffic controller, who requested the identification and details of the newly appeared aircraft, was unable to obtain its parameters, in all likelihood because this aircraft was not equipped with a secondary IFF system, which is typical for military aircraft.

Early detection of the aircraft appeared to be impossible because the situation in the airspace is monitored by radar systems working in standby mode that are able to detect aircraft at that distance only at an altitude of higher than 5,000 metres.

Detection became possible when the aircraft gained altitude.

Subsequent changes in the aircraft's flight parameters along its route indicate that it was flying in the area of the Boeing 777 crash and was monitoring the situation.

Earlier, Ukrainian officials stated that on the day of the accident no Ukrainian military aircraft were flying in that area. As you can see, that is not true. Thank you.

Statement by Lieutenant-General A. V. Kartapolov, Chief of the Main Operations Directorate and Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

We also have a question for our American colleagues. According to a statement by American officials, the United States has satellite images which show that the missile aimed at the Malaysian aircraft was launched by the militants. But no one has seen these images.

According to our calculations, during the period from 1706 to 1721 hours (Moscow time) on 21 July an American satellite was indeed passing over south-eastern Ukraine. This was a special satellite of the experimental space station designed to detect and track various missile launches. If the Americans do have images from this satellite, we would ask that they show them to the world community for further investigation.

This may or may not be a coincidence, but the Malaysian Boeing 777 crashed at the same time as the American satellite was observing Ukrainian territory.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the information we have presented is based on objective and reliable data from different Russian technical agencies. This is in contrast to the baseless accusations being made against us, one example of which are the images being shown by the media of a BUK-M1 launcher on a trailer supposedly being moved from Ukrainian to Russian territory. This is a clear case of trumped-up material.

These photographs were taken in the city of Krasnoarmiisk, as can be seen from a banner next to the road showing the address of a car dealership at 34 Dnepropetrovskaya Street. Krasnoarmiisk has been under the control of the Ukrainian army since 11 May.

We have a number of questions about this. What kind of launch system is this? Where was it being transported? Where is it now? Why is it not loaded with its full complement of missiles? When was a missile last launched from it?

In closing, I would like to emphasize that the Russian Federation has not given the militants BUK-M4 missile systems or any other type of weapon or military equipment.

The materials prepared today by the Ministry of Defence will be provided to the experts of European countries and Malaysia. I hope that they will help in conducting an objective investigation into the tragedy that occurred on 17 July in the skies over Donetsk.

The Ministry of Defence will inform you of any new facts that come to light concerning the crash of the Malaysian Boeing 777.

Source: Official website of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation